

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Excerpts from Romeo and Juliet

By William Shakespeare  
From From "The Tragedy Of Romeo And Juliet" • c. 1593

*William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was an English poet, playwright, and actor. He wrote 38 plays, including the tragic love story Romeo and Juliet, which have been translated into every major living language. As you read, consider the circumstances into which Romeo and Juliet were born. How do these circumstances shape the drama?*

### Prologue

#### CHORUS:

- [1] Two households, both alike in dignity,  
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,  
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,<sup>1</sup>  
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
- [5] From forth the fatal loins of these two foes  
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;  
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows  
Do with their death bury their parents' strife.  
The fearful passage of their death-mark'd  
love,
- [10] And the continuance of their parents' rage,  
Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,  
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;  
The which if you with patient ears attend,  
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.<sup>2</sup>



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### Excerpt from Act II, Scene II

#### JULIET:

- [15] O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore<sup>3</sup> art thou Romeo?  
Deny thy father, and refuse thy name;  
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,  
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

#### ROMEO:

*[Aside]* Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?<sup>4</sup>

1. **Mutiny (noun):** strife or turmoil
2. Whatever has been missed or not mentioned in the prologue will be shown/explained on stage.
3. "Wherefore" means "why" – Juliet is lamenting his name (i.e. his family).
4. Romeo says this line as an aside, or spoken dialogue that is heard by the audience but not by the other characters in the play. Romeo says this line as an aside because Juliet is not aware that he is listening.

**JULIET:**

- [20] 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;  
Thou art thyself though, not a Montague.  
What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,  
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part  
Belonging to a man. O! be some other name:
- [25] What's in a name? that which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet;  
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,  
Retain that dear perfection which he owes  
Without that title. Romeo, doff<sup>5</sup> thy name;
- [30] And for that name, which is no part of thee,  
Take all myself.

**ROMEO:**

I take thee at thy word.  
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptiz'd;  
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

**JULIET:**

- [35] What man art thou, that, thus be-screen'd in night,<sup>6</sup>  
So stumblest on my counsel?

**ROMEO:**

- By a name  
I know not how to tell thee who I am:  
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,  
[40] Because it is an enemy to thee:  
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

**JULIET:**

My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words  
Of that tongue's uttering, yet I know the sound:  
Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

**ROMEO:**

- [45] Neither, fair maid, if either thee dislike.

**JULIET:**

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5. **Doff** (*verb*): to remove or rid of  
6. "be-screen'd in night" – hidden or shrouded in the darkness

How cam'st thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?  
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,  
And the place death, considering who thou art,  
If any of my kinsmen<sup>7</sup> find thee here.

**ROMEO:**

[50] With love's light wings did I o'erperch these walls;  
For stony limits cannot hold love out,  
And what love can do that dares love attempt;  
Therefore thy kinsmen are no stop to me.

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7. **Kinsmen** (*noun*): family member; relative

## Text-Dependent Questions

**Directions:** For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. Summarize the prologue in three complete sentences. [RL.2]

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2. PART A: What does the phrase “star-cross’d” mean as used in line 6 of the prologue? [RL.4]

- A. Ill-fated
- B. Young
- C. Captivated
- D. Cursed

3. PART B: Which phrase best supports the answer to Part A? [RL.1]

- A. “makes civil hands unclean”
- B. “from forth the fatal loins”
- C. “misadventured piteous overthrown”
- D. “with their death bury their parents’ strife”

4. Which of the following statements best describes how Juliet responds to Romeo’s name? [RL.3]

- A. She insists that he give up his name.
- B. She laments his name Romeo.
- C. She laments that he was born a Montague.
- D. She resigns herself to the idea that they will never be together because of their families.

5. Explain the metaphor Juliet uses in lines 22-25 and how this meaning contributes to the overall theme. [RL.5] [RL.4]

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